United Nations S/PV.5096

Security Council

Fifty-ninth year

Provisional

5096th meeting

Wednesday, 8 December 2004, 9.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Baali	(Algeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	Chile	Mr. Andereya
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Trautwein
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Dumitru
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa, 21-25 November 2004 (S/2004/934)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

04-63902 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa, 21-25 November 2004 (S/2004/934)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Japan, the Netherlands, Rwanda and Uganda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2004/934, which contains the report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa, which took place from 21 to 25 November 2004.

At the outset, I give the floor to Mr. Jean-Marc de La Sablière, head of the Security Council mission to Central Africa, to provide a brief introduction to the report on that mission.

Mr. de La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I had the privilege a few days ago of reporting to the Security Council on the mission we carried out in Central Africa. Today, at the outset of this meeting, I will go to the heart of the matter and touch on the recommendations the mission has made to the Council. Members will find these recommendations in the report (S/2004/934), from paragraph 47 on.

I will begin by saying that the Security Council mission arrived at a time when in both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi there had been action in a new phase that should lead us to the end of the transition — that is to say, elections next year. It is absolutely crucial for the officials in both countries to take the necessary steps so that the transitions in both countries are irreversible. The closer we get to the end of the transition, the harder it is, of course — we know this — and the more those officials have to act decisively. But it is also crucial that in this phase the Burundians and the Congolese receive the support of the international community, support that is essential.

As regards the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there is an authority that brings together the main players from the international community that support the country, and that is the International Committee in Support of the Transition (CIAT). It is absolutely essential that the joint committees that were decided between the CIAT and the Congolese authorities be able to get to work. That is the case for one of them; but for the two others, we recommend that they begin working very quickly. We also believe that the international community, on this very important question of disarmament of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe, which I will come back to later, has to assist the Congolese authorities to build an integrated army, integrated brigades. We also believe that, with a view to elections, the international community should help to build an integrated police force as well.

With regard to Burundi, I draw attention to paragraph 53 in our report, where we mention the need for financial assistance for Burundi, which should receive disbursements consistent with their absorption capability.

As my colleagues all know, the mission dealt with the question of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, relations between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the presence of ex-FAR/Interahamwe, and threats of intervention into the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Security Council dealt with this last issue in the presidential statement issued yesterday, so I will not come back to it. On this issue, the Council has simply followed the recommendations that were made by the mission.

There is a problem we have to deal with, as emerges clearly from the Council's statement yesterday.

Turning to Burundi, I would say briefly that our general impression was that the peace process is on track, the spirit of reconciliation is quite present, and on many items since our return the Security Council has taken positions along the lines suggested by the mission. The Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) and expressed its intention to review measures that could be taken with respect to the FNL against those who would compromise the peace and reconciliation process. Finally, the Council was also able to respond to the Gatumba massacre. So I think that the Council has certainly followed the path recommended by our mission.

In conclusion, I will briefly mention the situation in the region. On several occasions, the mission mentioned the conclusions of the Great Lakes Conference, which is an important political event. The mission suggests in its conclusions and recommendations that the commitments that were made should be swiftly implemented and priorities should be set.

So there, in a nutshell, is a summary of the recommendations made by the mission. We also mention the follow-up to the mission by the Security Council in the last two weeks, a follow-up that was carried out quite quickly in many areas.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ambassador de La Sablière for his introduction.

I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mrs. Booto (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, allow me first to convey heartfelt congratulations on behalf of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December and for the effective way you are conducting the business of the Council.

My delegation is honoured to take part in this important meeting on the report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa. My delegation is happy that, for the second time now, the Council has taken the initiative to travel to Central Africa. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the high quality of the contributions made by all Council members under the leadership of Ambassador De La Sablière, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations. The mission came at the right time, following the first summit of heads of State in the framework of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held in Dar es Salaam on 19 and 20 November 2004, which concluded with the solemn adoption of the Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

For the States of the region, the Declaration's adoption represents great hope for stability, peace and democracy in the region. Even more, it underlines the political will of the leaders of the region to begin a new era of good-neighbourliness, collaboration and cooperation in order to rebuild those countries affected by a long period of war, to develop their economies and to ensure the return of a pluralist democratic system in the region, which will ensure genuine economic, social and cultural development through political stability.

Our study of the report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa (S/2004/934) leads my delegation to make the following observations. My delegation notes with satisfaction and a sense of encouragement that the members of the Council recognize the progress made in the region since the Council's last visit, in June 2003, in particular the efforts made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the June 2003 mission, especially the establishment and functioning of all transitional institutions, such as the Parliament, the Government of National Unity and the integrated high command for the armed forces and the police service, as well as the five institutions supporting democracy and territorial integrity. All those institutions are ready to begin operations and consult with one another in their careful preparations for the transparent, free and democratic general elections to be held next year. The Democratic Republic of the Congo wishes to reinforce that irreversible trend in order finally to emerge from the quagmire in which it was stuck to join the ranks of modern democratic States that participate in the development of universal civilization. In that context, members of the Council were reassured at the highest level of the State that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is determined to hold free elections in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Unfortunately, despite the progress made and the intensive consultations between Rwandan and

Congolese authorities to establish a climate of trust, cooperation and understanding in which to peacefully resolve any possible dispute that might arise while tackling the problem of members of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe, Rwanda continues to make threats towards the Democratic Republic of Congo, thus jeopardizing all bilateral agreements signed between Rwanda and my country in New York and elsewhere, as well as other, multilateral agreements. This is clearly a deliberate attempt to prolong insecurity in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to disrupt the transition process under way and prevent the holding of elections, in particular by contributing to the emergence of militias and dissident factions, which is what led to the events of Bukavu in early June 2004.

A few days ago, immediately following the Dar es Salaam Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes region and just when members of the Security Council were visiting the region and when the Summit of la Francophonie was under way in Ouagadougou, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, scorning the peace efforts in the Great Lakes, issued a declaration of war under the pretext of pursuing so-called negative forces. He then took the action of redeploying Rwandan troops in certain localities of the provinces of North and South Kivu.

My country notes that President Paul Kagame of Rwanda has demonstrated his willingness to take the responsibility of unleashing hostilities against the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in violation of all concluded agreements and of the principle of the inviolability of borders, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

We appeal to the great sense of responsibility of members of the Council to condemn Mr. Paul Kagame's arrogant and irresponsible attitude towards the international community, as those statements were made before the Rwandan senate barely one week after the signing of the Dar es Salaam Declaration, which we consider to be of historic importance in ensuring peace in Central Africa. In that context, I stress that all Governments of the Great Lakes region, including that of Rwanda, committed themselves to adopt non-aggression pacts and to promoting the establishment of a regional mechanism to establish a zone of lasting peace.

The President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila, addressed the nation in order to inform the Congolese people about the repeated acts of aggression that our country has suffered at the hands of Rwandan armed forces under the command of Mr. Paul Kagame. In his speech, President Kabila described the successive stages of the war that Rwanda has waged against my country since 1998 under the false pretext of pursuing ex-FAR and Interahamwe combatants in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The President of the Republic has demonstrated the good will of the Congolese authorities since 1999, cooperating closely with the Rwandan authorities and the international community in order to eradicate those elements from Congolese territory, in accordance with the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 1969 Convention of the Organization of African Unity Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. His action was also based on the Pretoria Agreement of 17 December 2002 and the tripartite agreement signed by Rwanda and Uganda in New York in October 2004. In other words, the entire legal arsenal has been mobilized in accordance with the norms of international law to achieve a peaceful settlement of the crisis caused by the presence of ex-FAR and Interahamwe elements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

All regions of the country, including in particular its eastern area — the provinces of the Kivus, Maniema and Orientale — aspire to live in peace and security within their borders. All incursions by foreign forces, including those of Rwanda, will require the Government of National Unity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to strictly implement Article 51 of the Charter, which stipulates that nothing in the Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

While endorsing the Council's presidential statement (S/PRST/2004/45) issued yesterday, 7 December 2004, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo intends to strengthen its security measures along the Rwandan border in order to protect the civilian population, because information coming from the Kivus describes acts of violence, inhuman and

degrading treatment and massacres that have targeted several thousand civilians, including women and children separated from their families, who have been subjected to cruelty at the hands of Rwandan soldiers. Those soldiers are known for their legendary cruelty and practice a scorched earth policy, destroying everything they find in the villages and causing massive displacements of the population, which seeks to flee those barbaric acts and massacres. Humanitarian personnel on the ground have also raised the alarm about the fact that those displacements will have serious consequences.

On the basis of that analysis, my delegation appeals to all countries that cherish peace and justice to lend their unwavering support to the efforts deployed by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) on behalf of the international community with the goal of ensuring peace, security and the establishment of democracy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those efforts are most solidly supported by the Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which pursues the sole, praiseworthy goal of establishing in the country the rule of law and the republican values of equality, justice and peace. My delegation stands ready to cooperate closely with the Security Council to attain those goals.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the kind words she addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Uganda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): Seeing is believing. Members of the Security Council delegation to Central Africa visited the region. They saw and heard what was going on with respect to the security situation in the region. They have come back convinced that the region has done a lot to promote peace and security. Their optimism is not misplaced. I congratulate Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, the head of the mission, and all the other members of the Council delegation on their efforts to forge close working ties with the leadership of the countries of the region.

The countries of the region have assumed ownership of the work to stabilize the region, as epitomized by what is going on in Burundi. Through bilateral and tripartite mechanisms, the countries of the region are addressing the issues of security, peace and development. The international community, through the United Nations, should not only monitor closely the implementation of those agreements and follow closely the roles and activities of the States of the region, as recommended in the report (S/2004/934), but also should give help where necessary and be actively involved. As His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda told the delegation, close involvement of regional States in the affairs of the region, in close partnership with the United Nations, has borne fruit and could serve as a model of cooperation.

Uganda has a considerable stake in the stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and believes that, in order to achieve durable peace, that country needs a strong central Government with a strong army to assert its authority over the entire territory. With strong authority, issues such as the alleged illegal exploitation of the country's natural resources can be controlled.

Uganda now believes that any threat posed to neighbouring countries by negative forces in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be addressed through the existing tripartite mechanisms, as well as through bilateral and regional agreements, with the involvement of the African Union where this is necessary. In that way, the sovereignty of States of the region would be safeguarded.

I would like to emphasize a point made by my President concerning the greater involvement of regional players such as the parties to the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in the international peace processes under way in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My country is ready to play any role the international community may deem necessary.

On the issue of armed groups in Ituri, which are outside the transitional process, it is important that they be integrated in the Transitional Government. My President has already informed the Council of the understanding reached between him and President Kabila on that issue. Uganda does not believe in or condone impunity. However, caution should be exercised here lest the vigorous pursuit of the alleged perpetrators drive them underground and impede the process of integration. Crime has no statute of limitation, and those involved could, if need be, always

be dealt with later, once institutions of government have been strongly established.

Lastly, the Council delegation touched on the humanitarian situation in northern Uganda. The Uganda Government has gone the extra mile by offering to talk to the rebels and by declaring a unilateral ceasefire in certain areas in order to allow them to assemble. The leadership of the rebels has not responded yet. It is in their interest to do so.

Otherwise, the military campaign has scored tremendous success with scores of abducted children rescued and large numbers of rebels surrendering. More than 700 rebels have been trained and absorbed into the Uganda armed forces as a sign of reconciliation. Soon, rebel activity in northern Uganda will be history.

I close, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I wish you well.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Uganda for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Burundi. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on the outstanding manner in which you are presiding over the work of the Security Council. I also congratulate the delegation of the United States on its presidency during the month of November.

My delegation welcomes the recent Security Council mission to Central Africa, led by Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, the fourth such visit since 2001. The report under consideration (S/2004/934), which complements the Secretary-General's report on Burundi (S/2004/902), published on 15 November 2004, points out honestly and unambiguously the progress and the challenges of the peace process in Burundi and in the subregion.

We would like to address the most important aspects, not only for the end of the transition of Burundi but also for the period beyond. First, dialogue among Burundians must continue so that the widest possible consensus can emerge on political issues, in particular power-sharing and the adoption of laws that will govern the post-transition period. For Burundi needs peace not only before the end of the transition, but also after it.

Council members were correct to ask their Burundian interlocutors during their visit if the political provisions being prepared presaged true stability and lasting peace after the elections. Let us repeat once again: the more we emphasize the search for political consensus, the more likely we are to have lasting peace after the elections.

The international community is called upon to encourage Burundians to build a Burundi for all and by all. It is also called upon to encourage the future leaders of the post-transition period to reassure today's sceptics by building a climate of trust and preventing what the Secretary-General calls in his report "recklessly pursuing a winner-takes-all strategy" (*S/2004/902, para. 62*).

Secondly, the question of the Forces nationales de libération (FNL) warrants special attention from the Council. My delegation is pleased to observe that the Council mission noted how concerned the Burundian authorities are by the behaviour of leaders of that rebel movement which spreads hatred and violence and which is trying to derail the electoral process. The authorities of Burundi are asking the Council not only to support the decisions of the heads of State of the subregion, but also to go further by promising all necessary assistance to prevent the leaders of the Forces nationales de libération, allied with the negative forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from sabotaging the peace process in Burundi and disrupting peace along the border, especially that between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

Thirdly, turning to the fight against impunity, Burundians are still waiting for the United Nations contribution. In that regard, we should make public the embargoed report of the Secretariat's assessment mission undertaken in May with the mandate of evaluating the timeliness and feasibility of establishing an international commission of judicial inquiry in Burundi. The report should be submitted to the Government of Burundi and to the Security Council before the end of the year, as promised, and everything should be done to hasten the consultations that will follow upon the report's publication. The struggle against impunity, the establishment of the rule of law and national reconciliation are important to the

stability of post-transition Burundi. They must be addressed lucidly.

Fourthly, international assistance is crucial to financing the elections and to implementing the reforms called for in the Arusha Agreement. Be it a question of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operation; reform of the security and justice sectors; assistance for returnees and displaced persons who wish to return home; or the reconstruction and revitalization of the economy, we still await the assistance promised by the lenders. Burundi cannot solve those problems by itself. My delegation invites the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi to visit the region and to see for itself yet again the link between bread and peace, especially at this crucial stage in the process of putting the country back on track. Without substantial humanitarian and economic assistance, poverty, disease and unemployment are potential factors for destabilization and could re-ignite social tensions after the elections because, as the Security Council mission observed, elections are not an end in themselves.

Those are the cornerstones that form the basis of adherence to the electoral calendar and end-of-transition activities, which could augur a more promising future for Burundi. To date, and following the Security Council's most recent visit, the train has been stubbornly moving towards the station, as witnessed by the 80 per cent registration of potential voters in the referendum and by the onset of demobilization at three sites. The first site is for the voluntarily demobilized personnel of the Burundian Armed Forces; the second is for the voluntarily demobilized personnel of the Forces pour la défense de la démocratie and other armed movements; and the third is for demobilized child-soldiers. Meanwhile, laws on the new national defence forces and the new national police have just been adopted by the National Assembly.

We take this opportunity to welcome the role that has been and will be played by the United Nations Operation in Burundi in all aspects of the late transition process, especially action to disarm the civilian population and election monitoring.

Reforms must move forward at the same pace in order to create a general symbiosis and dynamic to help Burundi overcome this crisis, the positive effects of which will be felt beyond its borders so as long as all the countries of the subregion are part of the dynamic established at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held at Dar es Salaam on 19 and 20 November under United Nations auspices. Our subregion needs to recover rapidly so that we can tackle our reconstruction and development through such organizations as the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, which must be reactivated, the East African Community and others.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of Burundi for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Netherlands. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. van den Berg (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro; and the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Council. I would also like to thank Ambassador de La Sablière for leading the Security Council mission and preparing the report that is before us today.

The visit of the Security Council mission to the region took place at a very appropriate moment, as it came only days after the heads of State of the core countries of the Great Lakes Conference signed the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region. By signing the Declaration, they have committed themselves to jointly putting an end to the endemic conflicts and persistent insecurity in the Great Lakes region through dialogue and confidence-building measures.

The European Union welcomes the outcome of the summit as clear evidence of the preparedness of the countries of the region to move from confrontation to consultation and cooperation. It is now imperative that all signatories respect the principles they have agreed upon and start implementing them without delay. The

European Union acknowledges that it will be impossible to tackle all the problems of the region at once. Therefore, the inter-ministerial committee awaits the difficult but important task of setting clear priorities and sequences. The European Union reiterates its readiness to continue its support for the conference through the Group of Friends.

The European Union is very concerned about reports concerning the military incursion by Rwandan armed forces into the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which took place only days after the Dar es Salaam Declaration was signed and the Security Council mission had left for New York. The threatening declarations made by Rwanda have a destabilizing effect on the transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The European Union condemns any violation of the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It calls upon the Rwandan Government to abide by the Declaration of Principles, to respect the sovereignty of the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to withdraw its forces. The European Union calls upon the Transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to react with restraint to avoid a military escalation. It calls upon both countries to resolve the crisis within existing mechanisms, such as the Tripartite Commission and the Joint Verification Mechanism, in close cooperation with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

At the same time, the European Union shares the view that the problem of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the former Forces armées rwandaises (FAR)/Interahamwe should be urgently addressed. First and foremost, the continued presence of ex-FAR/Interahamwe elements on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo poses a threat to the local population. The ensuing tensions risk undermining the Congolese peace process. The European Union therefore calls on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to intensify its efforts to disarm and demobilize such elements, with a view to their repatriation or resettlement. It also encourages MONUC to support the Government in whatever way it can. The imminent deployment of an additional brigade to North Kivu will provide additional security for the region and increase MONUC's capacity to prevent spoilers, both from within and outside, from derailing the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Every chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Peace and stability in the Great Lakes region will therefore remain elusive as long as one or more of the countries of the region has not been stabilized or reached a stage where the peace process is irreversible. The European Union, like the Security Council mission, is therefore heartened by the progress that has been made in the transitional processes in both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In both countries the focus is now on elections, which are to be held next year.

The situation in Burundi is particularly encouraging. The acceptance of the Constitution by all parties is a major step forward towards completing the transition period and the holding of elections, for which a clear calendar has been established. Voter registration is well under way.

The European Union welcomes the recent adoption of laws on the reform of the armed forces and the police, and calls upon the Burundian authorities to adopt the remaining key legislation, including the electoral code and the communal law, as soon as possible.

Another encouraging development is the recent launch of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. However, the continued support of the international community for the transitional process remains crucial for it to remain on track.

The European Union supports the mission's recommendation to reflect deeper on possible ways to effectively prevent spoilers like the Forces nationales de libération of Agathon Rwasa from undermining the peace process. The European Union also agrees with the mission's conclusion that, in order to prevent conflict from recurring, Burundi needs international assistance in the areas of security sector reform, DDR, reconstruction and development.

The European Union is less optimistic about the progress in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Last August, the Secretary-General outlined the political strategy that he believed should be implemented to reduce the role of spoilers and build confidence in the transition. MONUC was reinforced

and further expanded to support the Transitional Government in the implementation of the so-called critical path. In addition, the international community reiterated its willingness to assist the Transitional Government. That assistance would be facilitated by more regular contacts between the *espace présicentiel* and the International Committee in Support of the Transition, as well as through cooperation between the Government and international actors in the three joint commissions, which should be established as soon as possible. However, the primary responsibility for implementing the core tasks of the transition rests with the Transitional Government.

Elections should be held in 2005. Failure to do so could destabilize the country. The European Union is very concerned about the lack of progress in key areas during recent months, most notably with regard to legislation, DDR and security sector reform. As far as security sector reform is concerned, the training of a number of integrated brigades before the holding of elections seems essential. The European Union has supported, and is planning to support, the Transitional Government in virtually all of those areas. With regard to police, the European Union has provided training for an integrated police unit. A follow-up mission will guide the unit in the exercise of its new duties. Additional support for police reform, as well as for the integration of the army, is currently being considered.

The European Union is one of the main contributors to the multi-country demobilization and reintegration programme trust fund. With regard to elections, the European Commission has pledged €80 million, while several of its member States have also pledged significant contributions.

The struggle against corruption is another important element of the transition. In that regard, the European Union welcomes recent indications of a more forceful approach.

The Transitional Government needs international assistance, and the European Union is willing to do its part. However, international assistance cannot substitute for political will and sustained commitment on the part of the Transitional Government. The Government owes nothing less to its people, who are counting on their leaders to bring them the peace they so richly deserve.

There is no peace without justice, and there is no justice without the rule of law. The recent history of both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is also a history of widespread human rights violations and impunity. That cycle needs to be broken, as peace, democracy, good governance and sustainable development are unthinkable without respect for the rule of law. There are additional challenges to the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict societies: at the very moment when the need for justice is greatest, the legal structures necessary to deliver that justice may well be absent. Efforts at the national level should, where necessary, be complemented at the international level through cooperation with relevant international institutions, notably the International Criminal Court.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kamanzi (Rwanda): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to express my appreciation to the delegation of the United States for a job well done last month. Allow me also to thank the members of the Council for their decision to send a mission to Central Africa in November 2004, as well to thank the leader of the mission for presenting its report. My Government believes that such visits to the field are useful to enable the Council to appreciate first-hand the challenges being faced with respect to peace, security, poverty and underdevelopment in the region.

The mission began its visit one day after the historic signing of the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region. It is my Government's earnest hope that the process that began in Dar es Salaam on 20 November will culminate in genuine and durable peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region and in the wider African continent. We welcome the determination of the heads of State present at Dar es Salaam to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States in the region and to prevent the use of their own territories for subversive activities by armed groups. We also welcome their strong commitment to combat genocide in the region and to disarm and arrest the perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that the allegations pertaining to the presence of Rwandan army troops are false. We have thus far deployed our troops along the common border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to counter incursions perpetrated by former Forces armées rwandaises(FAR)/Interahamwe from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Council members will be aware of my Government's concern that for 10 years the problem of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe based on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has not been conclusively addressed and, as a result, remains a source of insecurity and unrest for Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the wider region. Over the last 10 years, Rwanda's sovereignty and territorial integrity have been repeatedly violated with relative impunity by those forces. Cross-border attacks are very frequent. Over the last few months alone, over 600 of those forces have been captured while conducting operations inside Rwanda. Their cross-border operations have caused loss of life and property and injury to civilians, as well as destruction of infrastructure.

Despite numerous Council resolutions, those forces continue to live and conduct criminal activities from within their mobilized units in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They also continue to receive military and other supplies and to recruit, train and brainwash a significant number of members of the younger generation that they involve in their military activities.

We are aware that a new plan is now on the table regarding the disarmament of those negative forces. However, it is my Government's experience that it is not absence of good ideas or new and fresh plans that killed the old plans, but rather the lack of political will to implement them.

My Government earnestly hopes that the problem of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe can be rapidly and decisively addressed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), so that the need for any country in the region to take any action against those forces in self-defense is eliminated.

My Government looks forward to the operationalization of the Joint Verification Mechanism. In that regard, Rwanda has demonstrated its commitment by taking the necessary steps to fulfil its obligations, including the appointment of representatives. We look forward to the appointment of all representatives so that the mechanism could be operationalized in the very near future.

Concerning the situation in Bukavu and the wider region of the Kivus, my Government would like to express its concern about the plight of the Banyamulenge people and other groups who are being persecuted and marginalized. We appeal to the Security Council to ensure that their rights and freedoms are upheld as citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and that those who have been forced to flee their country are allowed to return home and live in peace and dignity.

Turning to the situation in Burundi, my Government welcomes the progress in the transition process. My Government is encouraged by the seriousness and resolve of the Burundian authorities to settle the issues that are still outstanding and to respect and maintain the electoral calendar. Rwanda supports all measures that will ensure long-term peace, stability, reunification, reconciliation, democracy and power-sharing and justice and development in Burundi, and will continue to support the transitional process.

The Rwandan Government believes that strong and decisive measures need to be taken against the Forces nationales de libération (FNL), which, following its joint attack with the exFAR/Interahamwe against the refugees in Gatumba, slaughtered, in cold blood, 160 Banyamulenge refugees and has continuously been destabilizing the country.

My Government welcomes the conclusion of the Security Council mission to Central Africa that, as long as the problem of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe remains, it will be a source of instability in the region. We also welcome the mission's recognition that this group poses a threat to the civilian population and neighbouring countries and that needs, therefore, the problem to be rapidly addressed. That is the most critical factor for my Government — that the problem be rapidly and decisively addressed without delay. We indeed appeal to the Council to confirm that this problem will be rapidly addressed.

My Government notes that in the presidential statement issued by the Security Council yesterday, the Council described the armed presence and activities of

the ex-FAR/Interahamwe as unacceptable. My Government also considers the presence of those forces in mobilized positions that pose a real and direct threat to the security of Rwanda to be unacceptable. We also find it unacceptable that those forces are a present and increasing threat to Rwanda and the wider region, even now, after the genocide.

For 10 years my Government has appealed for this problem to be rapidly addressed. Elaborate plans have been drawn up, including the timetables and plans that were a key component of the Lusaka and Pretoria agreements. While Rwanda fulfilled its commitments under both agreements, by completely withdrawing all of its troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has yet to fulfil its commitment to disarm, demobilize and repatriate the ex-FAR/Interahamwe, even now, five and a half years after the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and three and a half years since the signing of the Pretoria Agreement.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council and to urge members to keep their attention focused on this issue in order to quickly establish peace and stability in our region.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kitaoka (Japan): We appreciate the decision to dispatch a Security Council mission to the Central Africa region. The mission encouraged the ownership initiative of Africa for peace and security at a very critical moment for the region, when the first summit meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa, which embodies that initiative, was taking place. The subsequent disturbance in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, however, has seriously damaged the prospects for achieving peace and stability in the region. I therefore wish to discuss three points that Japan considers important in that connection.

First, we are deeply concerned about the reported incursion of Rwandan troops across the border of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We must urgently seek to establish the facts, since the event, if it actually occurred, jeopardizes the efforts of the Security Council and the international community to bring about peace in the Great Lakes region. The Government of Rwanda should first have recourse to such political means as the Joint Verification Mechanism or the tripartite mechanism to address its security concerns.

The immediate and active cooperation of the Government of Rwanda in getting the Joint Verification Mechanism operational is an absolute requirement. At the same time, the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement of members of the former Rwandan Army (ex-FAR) forces and Interahamwe in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be accelerated, and we therefore urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make every possible effort to disarm and repatriate those soldiers as expeditiously as possible, in cooperation with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the newly deploying brigades, in particular.

Secondly, with regard to Burundi, we first of all commend and support the role played by the Regional Peace Initiative and the African Union in promoting the peace process. It is important for all the parties concerned to make further efforts to advance the process, in accordance with the newly established schedule, so as to enable the indirect election of the new President to be held and, thus, the process to be completed next April. We condemn the Forces nationales de libération (FLN) of Agathon Rwasa for continuing to reject the peace process and fighting against the Forces armées burundaises. We also strongly condemn the Gatumba massacre. Such a tragedy must never be repeated in this region. We welcome in this regard the intention of the Government of Burundi, after its national investigation, to refer the matter to the International Criminal Court. I expect those efforts to lead to the identification of those responsible for the massacre and to ensure that they are brought to justice.

Thirdly, with regard to the activities of the peacekeeping operation, it is important to note that the Security Council mission visited United Nations peacekeepers in both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi to make assessments on the ground. Based on the experience gained through that mission, the Security Council should seek to conduct more in-depth discussions on how peacekeeping operations can contribute to making elections successful in those countries and can then be drawn

down in accordance with a clearly defined exit strategy.

In this connection, I must mention that the instances of sexual abuse alleged to have been committed by members of MONUC betray the trust and confidence of the local population and seriously undermine the credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole. The Secretariat must not suppress the facts in this case. All information should be disclosed, and strict disciplinary measures to prevent any recurrence should be taken at once.

In closing, I cannot overstate the importance of a regional approach to the peace and stability of the Central African region. The Security Council should consider how to mobilize and optimize the military, political and socio-economic tools available to the international community in order to promote overall peace in the region. Japan, for its part, has actively participated in the discussion and, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council from next year, stands ready to discharge its enhanced responsibilities in this regard.

Mr. Trautwein (Germany): I would like, first, to fully align my delegation with the statement just delivered by the representation of the Netherlands on behalf of the presidency of the European Union. I will therefore limit myself to a few comments.

We would like to thank Ambassador de La Sablière and the Secretariat for preparing and leading the mission in such an excellent way. My delegation wishes that we could call the mission a full success. But the reports of a major military operation by Rwandan troops in eastern Congo and the ensuing controversy between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of Rwanda have demonstrated that there is a continuing considerable lack of confidence- or simply distrust. Yesterday's reaction by the Council in the form of a presidential statement should be a very clear warning to Rwanda. The intention stated by Rwanda to conduct a calibrated action within 14 days against members of the former Rwandan Army (ex-FAR) forces and Interahamwe might reignite the regional conflict, and it seriously threatens the fragile transitional process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must also play its part more actively. In particular, it has to do more to disarm the troops of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe. Only a serious and sustained military effort on the part of the Congolese Army will yield success. Rwanda, in return, must offer a climate to potential returnees in which they feel welcome and can enjoy full political freedoms.

Although the mission dealt primarily with the Great Lakes conflict, we had a chance to speak briefly with President Museveni about the conflict in northern Uganda and the ensuing humanitarian crisis there. The Council should keep the conflict on its agenda and encourage peaceful solutions. We welcome any attempt on the part of the Ugandan Government to enter into a dialogue with the Lord's Resistance Army leadership.

In conclusion, I would like to point out a very important aspect of this and other missions of the Council. Although we are sometimes frustrated by developments in the Great Lakes region, we should always bear in mind that our efforts to achieve lasting peace are aimed at populations longing desperately for a normal life in a stable environment. The mission met many courageous and dedicated persons from all walks of life, who devote their lives to ending impunity, building bridges between ethnic groups and bringing humanitarian assistance to communities forgotten by their Government and local rulers. That was, and is, very inspiring.

Mr. Dumitru (Romania) (spoke in French): Romania fully associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the presidency of the European Union.

I would like to make a few brief remarks. First, I would like to thank Ambassador de La Sablière for the outstanding way in which he led the most recent mission of the Security Council to Central Africa. The thorough grasp of the issues that he demonstrated, in addition to his indefatigable dynamism and the eloquence for which he is so well known, meant that the messages of the Council were transmitted forcefully and clearly to the various interlocutors. We are also grateful to the countries of the subregion that received the mission. The dialogue that was conducted there, backed up by the views expressed today by the representatives of the countries concerned, provide an essential input for the deliberations that members of the Council will continue to conduct on matters of concern to them.

Secondly, we welcome the specific outcomes of the mission, which again prove how this instrument that the Council possesses can add value.

First of all, the mission stressed the ongoing commitment of the Council to peace and security in a key region of Africa. The direct contacts with the stakeholders improved our understanding of the facts on the ground and strengthened cooperation with regional and subregional partners. The mission was able to assess, at first hand, the excellent job done by both peacekeeping operations deployed in the region — the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), as well as the effectiveness of the activities of the special representatives of the Secretary-General and other parts of the United Nations presence, whose synergy translates the Council's mandates into action.

In view of the challenges that must be met in order to meet the 2005 deadline for elections, we welcome the fact that the Council mission stressed the need for the Governments and parliaments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi to hasten the adoption of the decisions and measures required of them. Accordingly, Romania wishes to reiterate that the primary responsibility of the political leaders of Central African countries is not only to their own peoples and countries, but also to neighbouring peoples and States.

Thirdly, we wish to point out something that is of particular interest to Romania, as well as to other members of the Council. While the mission focused on the two situations that require the vigilant attention of the Council — those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi — it also adopted a regional approach. That regional approach included talks with the Rwandese President, Mr. Paul Kagame, and the President of Uganda, Mr. Yoweri Museveni, it is crucial to resolving, in an integrated and consistent manner, the common issues of peace and security. As an African proverb says, everyone travelling in the same boat has the same destination.

The fact that the Council mission had two focuses was very important, since progress in the transitional processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi is still fragile, due both to domestic difficulties and to negative external factors. Among those factors, we wish to draw the Council's attention to the serious lack of trust that continues to prevail in the domestic political atmosphere, among the political leaders of groups and communities and in relations between the main regional actors. Accordingly, we welcome the recent Dar es Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region. We take note of the fact that confidence-building is among the priority policy options and guiding principles mentioned in the first section of part III of the Declaration, on peace and security. However, it is clear that, in the light of the discussions conducted by the Council mission and of subsequent events related to the renewed tension between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, this priority must indeed be put into practice, in order to overcome the currently prevailing distrust.

Fourthly, we share the broader vision of the mission, since it called upon parties in the region to look beyond the preparation and organization of the 2005 elections. While primary energy should be devoted, in the short-term, to that essential goal, we must also consider the political future of both countries after the elections are held and after the current transitional processes are completed. As shown by the experience of other countries, including Romania, that have seen successful political transitions holding elections is not an end in itself. Obviously, stability, peace and security will depend on what happens during the post-electoral, post-transition phase in the political and development areas.

There are, of course, many other lessons to be learned from the Council's mission to Central Africa. We support the set of recommendations made by the mission and systematic follow-up of these recommendations by the Council. At the same time, the indubitable impact on the ground prompts us to conclude that while we should continue to plan missions to Africa, also we must think about similar activities for 2005 in other regions in conflict that are on the Security Council agenda and that directly concern the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of France for his additional remarks, today, on the Security Council mission to Central Africa. I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador De La Sablière and his team for the excellent preparation for and performance of the

mission. I would also like to make the following points.

First, my delegation reiterates its support for the nature of such missions. They offer an invaluable opportunity for better and deeper knowledge on specific issues and situations and directly convey the Council's commitment to the advancement of peace in war-torn regions.

Secondly, Brazil is encouraged by the mission's progress, which its members witnessed particularly in Burundi, but also in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We welcome the efforts being made in order to conduct elections in 2005 according to the agreed calendar, although we are conscious that the holding of elections is not an end in itself. At the same time, we also take note of the logistical concerns highlighted by local authorities, which may delay the electoral process in Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. If necessary, new dates must be agreed upon by all concerned parties, but a delay in the elections must be considered only as a last resort, in order to guarantee free and fair elections.

The mission also recognized that all progress achieved on the political and security agendas could be jeopardized if legitimate concerns about social and economic development are not properly addressed. In that regard, in considering the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Burundi, the Council should devote further attention to the Operation's role in promoting and coordinating international efforts aimed at fostering development in Burundi.

Thirdly, I acknowledge the efforts made by the mission to cope with the unexpected challenge posed by the decision of the Rwandese authorities to launch, at the time of the mission's visit to the region, a series of threats that could easily undermine the Congolese peace process. In this regard, my delegation commends Ambassador De La Sablière for his vigorous leadership, which was responsible for a timely and balanced response to the situation. The mission had the opportunity to witness the concerns deriving from the presence of foreign armed troops, including members of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe, in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council is aware of remaining problems in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and should continue to back the efforts being made by Congolese authorities, with the support of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, aimed at accelerating the disarmament and demobilization of foreign armed troops. The presidential statement adopted yesterday by the Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda (S/PRST/2004/45) is a further step reflecting our interest in the establishment of peace and stability in the region.

Fourthly, my delegation supports the recommendations in the report (S/2004/934). Because of their pertinence and urgency, I would underline a number of them: first, the request for the international community to assist in the advancement of the transition process in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including in the preparation of elections; secondly, the need for the Transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to develop its programme of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation in order to address the problems related to the presence of foreign armed groups in its territory; thirdly, the request for the Governments of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement expeditiously the Joint Verification Mechanism already agreed on by both parties; and, last but not least, the recommendation that the Council undertake a deeper reflection on the issue of the Forces nationales de libération with a view to considering what additional measures could be taken against those in that movement who compromise the peace process.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by joining others in thanking Ambassador De La Sablière for his superb leadership of the Council's mission. The delegation of the Netherlands has already delivered a statement on behalf of the European Union, and I associate my delegation with that statement.

I want to begin where my German colleague left off. Our efforts are about peace for ordinary people. We met impressive representatives of civil society in both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

I should like to make a few remarks about the Democratic Republic of the Congo, underlining some of the recommendations from the mission's report (S/2004/934). Civil society in the Democratic Republic of the Congo clearly wants elections, and peace

through elections, in 2005. That makes essential rigorous pursuit of the road map by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That in turn requires the *espace présidentiel* to work together and with Parliament. It also requires their collaboration with the international community, especially the International Committee in Support of the Transition (CIAT). My Government considers it extremely important that all three joint commissions of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and CIAT — that is, the commissions on security-sector reform, elections and legislation — should get under way. We welcomed President Kabila's assurance to the mission, when we met him, that all three would be up and running before the end of the year.

I should now like to make three points about the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and its functioning. The first relates to our concern that the issue of sexual exploitation should be gripped hard immediately. Urgent investigation and rapid action by the United Nations and troop-contributing countries is essential. The second point is that it is also essential that MONUC should use its enhanced resources effectively. We think that that means focusing on security-sector reform, on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) and on elections. The third point is that this is going to be extremely demanding for MONUC in 2005. Among other things, we would like MONUC to help catalyse the international community's work on security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to give early attention to the support for the election process that MONUC and the international community must deliver. We would welcome early recommendations from MONUC and the Secretary-General on that point, concerning election support.

I shall now make some points about the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. As our mission report underlines, instability in that part of the country has an impact on the whole Great Lakes region. To address that problem, leaders in the region must collaborate and must use their many agreed mechanisms, not threats and inflammatory language. The threats from Rwanda, even while the Council's mission was under way, were unacceptable.

As the mission's report also observes, as long as the problem of members of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR)/Interahamwe persists in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it will be a source of instability in the region. Our presidential statement (S/PRST/2004/45) yesterday recognized that. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUC have a plan for ensuring the disarmament and repatriation of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe, and it needs to be accelerated as much as possible. Progress in the Kivus, but also in Ituri, therefore depends crucially on the construction of a Congolese national army and on DDRRR.

Turning briefly to Burundi, I wish to underline just two points. The first is that, while Burundi faces a demanding election schedule, the Council mission came away confident that that schedule could now be achieved and deserved our support, but that elections are not an end in themselves and that attention to the post-election political environment is essential. Secondly, I want to underline the importance of the issue of impunity. We look forward to an early report from the Secretary-General in that regard.

Finally, I welcome the fact that the Council was able to discuss with President Museveni of Uganda ways and means to find a solution to the conflict in northern Uganda, which has caused a grievous humanitarian crisis. There have been some encouraging steps in the peace process, but we are convinced that that is a situation that the Council needs to continue to monitor.

Mr. Mercado (Philippines): Allow me to begin by taking this opportunity to express our congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December. We would also like to commend Ambassador Danforth and other members of the United States delegation on their successful presidency in November. Likewise, we join other delegations in thanking Ambassador De La Sablière for his able leadership of the mission to Central Africa.

There is no doubt that the Council considers developments in Central Africa very seriously. During the past 12 years, eight of the Council's 24 missions were to the region. The recent mission is but one manifestation of this body's continued concern over the situation in the region. The timing and impact of the mission take on greater significance because the mission came on the heels of the successful convening of the Great Lakes Conference in Dar es Salaam.

My delegation believes that the mission and the Conference complemented each other, and it is in that context that we would like to highlight the following points.

First, just as the 11 heads of State pledged to fully support the national processes in the region, the Security Council and the international community should also express the same solid support, particularly with respect to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. We are pleased that the transitional peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi have been proceeding at a brisk pace. We therefore encourage the leaders of the Transitional Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of Burundi to accelerate their efforts to prepare for the holding of elections next year and to persevere in their commitment to make the peace processes irreversible.

Secondly, aware that those leaders recognize the need to respect the fundamental principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty, non-interference and non-aggression, the Security Council and the international community should continue to impress strongly on the countries in the region that cross-border issues — such as the problem of foreign armed combatants — must be resolved through the available multilateral, regional and bilateral mechanisms, in a spirit of sustained dialogue and cooperation. The Council's position on the current border problem in the region was clearly set out in the presidential statement (S/PRST/2004/45) issued yesterday.

Thirdly, mindful of the importance accorded economic development and humanitarian and social issues, as evidenced by the preponderance of commitments in the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, the Security Council should exert its influence by urging the international community — particularly donor countries — to extend the needed financial and technical assistance to those countries in order to help alleviate poverty. A case in point is in Burundi, where all the interlocutors whom the mission met repeatedly mentioned the direct link between peace and development, particularly the need to address the dire poverty in the country through the mobilization of funds necessary for economic recovery and national reconstruction, including relief from external debt.

Fourthly, my delegation reiterates its view that the elections are not the be-all and end-all of the process and that the post-election scenario and the preparations for activities in its aftermath are just as important. The addressing of post-conflict peacebuilding issues should begin as early as possible, if not now. The region also needs assistance for its 127 million people, who are struggling to cope with raging conflicts, repeated and continued displacement, drought and disease, including the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Fifthly, acknowledging the invitation to the United Nations to assist the member States of the Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Security Council should be prepared to contribute its share to its two major peacekeeping operations in the region: the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB). My delegation would like to take this opportunity to commend MONUC and ONUB, particularly their leaders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General William Swing and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie, for their constructive roles in helping the peace processes in their respective jurisdictions.

Finally, the Great Lakes conference ended with the setting up of follow-up mechanisms designed to ensure that work on implementing the Dar es Salaam Declaration continues until the second summit is held a year from now in Kenya. We hope that, by the time the second conference is convened and the Council once again visits the region, the countries will have already implemented several of the commitments contained in the Declaration and will have taken solid steps forward in achieving peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation would like first of all to extend its congratulations to Ambassador Baali and the Algerian delegation upon assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month. We would also like to express our appreciation and thanks to the successful American presidency last month under the able leadership of Ambassador Danforth.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière for leading the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region and

for presenting its report. The mission reaffirmed the Council's commitment to peace and security in that important region. I would like to take this opportunity to make the following comments and suggestions:

First, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the main challenge now is to continue to support the peace process. There have been some justifiable expressions of skepticism. Efforts should continue to ensure that the Transitional Government begin to function as a unified national Government and that the parties therein abide by their commitments, especially with regard to elections, security sector reform and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of militias.

Second, effective efforts have to be made to disarm local and foreign armed groups, like the Mayi-Mayi, and the Hema and Lendu militias, as well as the ex-FAR/Interahamwe, which remain outside the political process. Political measures to ensure a smooth transition need to be accompanied by a strengthening of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's national institutions and their capacity to exert State authority throughout the country.

Third, regional stability is crucial in order to protect and promote the transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Pakistan attaches the highest importance to respect for the principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity for all States. International borders are inviolable. In the absence of actual external military aggression, the threat or use of force across international borders cannot be justified. As the Security Council's presidential statement has declared, Rwanda should withdraw without delay any forces that might be in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and exercise restraint in its actions and pronouncements. At the same time, the problem for regional security posed by the ex-FAR/Interahamwe also needs to be addressed. In that regard, we suggest the development of a more effective strategy to disarm and repatriate those groups. The Tripartite Commission, as well as the Joint Verification Mechanism between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be more effectively utilized in that context.

Fourth, the transitional process in Burundi, despite the challenges to it, is moving forward in the right direction. The international community must support that adequately. However, the threat posed by FNL (Rwasa), and its cross-border links with other extremist forces, as testified to by the Gatumba massacre, will have to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Fifth, the deployment of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) and the ongoing build-up of United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo should contribute to improving mutual confidence between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi and thus enhance security and stability in the region. Pakistan has contributed a brigade to MONUC for the South Kivu area. That is in addition to our contribution of a mechanized infantry battalion for MONUC's Ituri brigade. A Pakistani battalion has also deployed with ONUB in Burundi's Cibitoke Province across the Democratic Republic of the Congo border. The deployment of Pakistani units on both sides of the Burundi-Democratic Republic of the Congo border will, in our view, considerably enhance coordinated United Nations peacekeeping action in the region.

Sixth, the illegal exploitation of natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a root cause of the complex threats to peace and stability in the region. As one of our colleagues on the Council's mission privately observed, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is "too big, too rich and too weak". The illegal exploitation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's resources motivates the militias and funds their campaign of violence and pillage. But the major profits of such illegal exploitation often end up in coffers far removed from the Great Lakes region. Until that rape of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's resources is stopped, it will be difficult to promote peace, security and prosperity in that unfortunate country. Until then, corruption and conflict will continue in the region. That issue has to be addressed. The Security Council — or if the Council cannot act, some other United Nations organ — should follow up on the Kassem report and investigate and identify those involved in the illegal exploitation of natural resources and those who finance or profit from that, thus enabling the international community to end that unfortunate legacy that has afflicted the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other nations for so long.

Seventh, peace and development are indivisible. The consolidation of peace in the region requires sustained international commitment, particularly from

the donor community, to support economic and social development in the region. Without that, conflict may be a recurring feature in the Great Lakes region.

Finally, we need to ensure ways and means to realize the objectives and decisions of the recent summit conference on the Great Lakes to promote comprehensive peace and prosperity. In particular, it is essential to put in place effective regional mechanisms for the peaceful settlement and resolution of disputes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The President *(spoke in Arabic)*: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his kind words addressed to Ambassador Baali and the Algerian delegation.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) *(spoke in French)*: I would like to thank the representative of France for the summary of the report that he has given us. I would also like to pay tribute to him for the professionalism he displayed as head of the Security Council mission during our stay in Central Africa. We fully share his analysis of the situation with respect to the recent events that have taken place in that sub-region, and also with respect to the peace process underway in Central Africa. We believe that the Council's message was clear and expressed the willingness of the international community to facilitate the peace process in the sub-region. We hope that the Council's message in that regard was well understood.

I would simply like to make the following comments. It seems that the most important challenges to be addressed in both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo consist of adherence to the timetable for the elections and the establishment of institutions. It also seems that the question of the armed presence of ex-FAR Interahamwe should also be monitored more carefully by our Council and that a practical and urgent solution should be found by the international community with a view to holding peaceful elections throughout the entire territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, but also in order to finally give Rwanda a guarantee of the security that it needs along its border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is also crucial that the Joint Verification Mechanism become operational immediately, as well as the tripartite mechanism that involves Uganda. It seems today that the presence of ex-FAR and other armed groups must be addressed from the point of view of their subregional involvement.

The Council should also discuss further the question of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration of ex-FAR/Interahamwe. The principle of their disarmament and their demobilization is now accepted, and there is no need to go further into that. However, on the question of the threat of genocide, we believe that we have to go beyond the logic of the fable of the wolf and the lamb, and look at the human rights dimension of the problem. Today, the question of genocide is taken into account by the international community through a certain number of mechanisms and instruments.

In this connection, we have to adopt the approach of individual responsibility rather than the wholesale condemnation or demonization of a political movement, an armed group or an ethnic group. Having said this, we believe that finding a solution to the question of the threat of the presence of ex-FAR/Interahamwe should be considered within the framework of bilateral and trilateral mechanisms that have been set up. Parties must refrain from any unilateral action, because it is only in this way that they can show that they are truly committed to the objective of stabilizing the region and thus contribute to the efforts made by the international community to strengthen the peace process in the region.

We also have to think further about effective ways to combat impunity so as to discourage all those who are thwarting the efforts of the international community and to prevent events as tragic as the ones that we saw in the Gatumba refugee camp. The credibility of the Council is also at stake, because the people in this region are impatiently awaiting the establishment of an international commission to investigate that crime.

We also have to deal more carefully with the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially since this phenomenon has implications not only for security but also for the spread of corruption. It could also have implications on governance, once institutions have been set up after the eagerly awaited elections.

With the international conference on the Great Lakes region and dialogue structures already under way at the bilateral and multilateral level, the necessary instruments exist to restore peace to the subregion and to establish the basis for a gradual implementation of development plans for the

subregion. We have to encourage dialogue as well as concessions, which are the only way of making progress towards peace.

Furthermore, the Council should closely follow the implementation of the conclusions of the mission to Central Africa. A possible quarterly review, I think, would be appropriate in order to bring pressure to bear on the parties.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We believe that the Algerian presidency of the Security Council deserves praise for having organized this open meeting of the Council on the recent mission that we carried out to Central Africa, which gives us a possibility of assessing the results of the mission and to think together with other Member States of the Organization about how this Council and the United Nations as a whole could continue working actively in order to promote peace, stability and progress in the Great Lakes region. Before continuing, I would like to point out that Spain, of course, supports what has already been expressed by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union.

The Security Council's mission to Central Africa, led skilfully by Ambassador de La Sablière, took place at a particularly complex time, because, on the one hand, the key States of the region, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, find themselves in a crucial phase of their respective transition processes, and on the other hand, it is also clear that the regional dimension is taking on a growing importance.

With respect to the transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we have to stress the need for Congolese political forces to reach an agreement that would make it possible to quickly adopt a constitutional text as well as approve pending legislative texts that would lead to holding elections planned for June 2005. Furthermore, the security sector reform and, more concretely, the establishment of unified armed forces and the reform of the police sector are of particular importance and are urgent at the moment. Holding elections requires safety conditions which can only be guaranteed through the deployment of a sufficient number of troops from the future integrated armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Furthermore, as the mission was able to observe in Bukavu, the deployment of contingents made up of Congolese integrated forces is crucial in order to address the instability in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular, the provinces of Ituri and the Kivus.

With respect to the situation in Burundi and after the agreement between the political parties on the new constitution, priority actions include the quick approval of pending legislative texts, respect of the electoral calendar, as well as making significant progress in the demobilization process. The authorities of Burundi have to tackle all this, relying on the continued and effective assistance of the international community.

In any case, as the Council's mission stressed on several occasions on their visit to the region, elections are a necessary factor within the transition process, but this should not be considered an end in itself. Once the transition period is over in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi, after the holding of free, democratic and broadly participatory elections in the scheduled timelines, we will begin a new and important phase in which Governments that have emerged from the elections will have to work actively in order to promote reconciliation, peace and sustainable development with the support of the international community. Experience has shown us that the period that follows the first elections after a conflict raises significant challenges, and it is up to everyone, in particular the victors in the election, to place national interest before particular interests so that they may guarantee long-term stability and progress.

With respect to the regional dimension, in recent times, we have seen important initiatives at the bilateral, trilateral and multilateral level among the countries concerned. I am referring to the establishment of the Joint Verification Mechanism between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, the completion of the October 2004 tripartite agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, as well as the signing of the Dar es Salaam Declaration on 20 November, following the first summit of the international conference on the Great Lakes region of Africa. It is crucial that the States involved, instead of resorting to any type of unilateral action, should use those mechanisms and provisions, both to resolve any dispute and, above all, to promote trust and cooperation within the entire region.

The countries of Central Africa are facing important challenges at both at the national and regional levels. The political will of the States in the region — of their leaders and their political forces — to move forward along the path of peace, stability and development is paramount and irreplaceable. We trust that the Security Council will continue to provide support to encourage the processes under way and to help to lay the foundations for lasting peace in the region, a necessary condition for the progress and economic and social development of the peoples of the region.

The President *(spoke in Arabic)*: I thank the representative of Spain for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I wish to start by thanking the Algerian presidency for convening this important meeting. I would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of France, Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, for the way he conducted the Security Council mission to the Central African region. The mission spoke with one voice, and there was teamwork. The leaders of the region whom we met were very attentive to the messages that the Council had to deliver.

The Council mission took place at a crucial moment, as the sustainability of peace and stability in both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo will depend mostly on the achievements to be reached by the main national actors and by the international community during this transition period. Last week, Ambassador de La Sablière spoke on the positive developments in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as on the difficulties facing this process in those countries.

My delegation is deeply concerned at the developments in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In our opinion, the countries of the region should avoid any action contrary to the spirit of the Dar es Salaam Declaration on the Great Lakes, which states that the countries of the Great Lakes region "fully support the national peace process in the region and refrain from any acts, statements or attitudes likely to negatively impact them, including through the media".

When the mission visited Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo the issue of the ex-Far/Interahamwe was fully discussed at the appropriate level, as all Council members have previously stated. In both countries those forces were recognized as a source of instability in the region — and they are. There is, therefore, a common understanding on the need to find a solution to the ex-Far/Interahamwe issue, one independent of the perception of each of the countries and of the Security Council. In our opinion, the long-lasting solution to this issue should be found through dialogue and the operationalization of the existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, such as the Joint Verification Mechanism and the tripartite agreement, and in full respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of the countries of the region.

Other factors that concur for the same objective are the ongoing enhancement of the presence of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in the east of that country; the development by the Congolese authorities of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement plan, to be supported by MONUC in particular; and the ongoing "Walungu operation", a joint exercise of the Congolese Armed Forces and MONUC aimed at repatriating Rwandan armed elements.

The use of legal instruments such as an arms embargo, and a more proactive attitude on the part of the international community with regard to the illicit exploitation of natural resources, which has been referred to here very vividly by the Ambassador of Pakistan — and we support his idea — will also contribute to the same purpose.

The countries of the region should, therefore, refrain from any action that may only exacerbate an already volatile situation and fuel tension among local communities.

Regarding Burundi, it is important that the international community adopt a concerted position on the FNL (Rwasa) question, in conformity with the position of the countries of the region that classify the FNL as a terrorist group.

Everything possible should be done to ensure that the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi will constitute a new source of hope and not the beginning of another cycle of violence. It is, therefore, important that the holding of elections not be considered an end in itself. The question of power-

sharing in the post-electoral period should be central to the political strategy of the two countries.

My delegation particularly appreciates the importance given to the regional dimension in these discussions. We are dealing with countries that have more to share than to divide them, taking into account their history and the traditional ties of their people. Burundi's request to join the bilateral and trilateral mechanisms created by Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda deserves the attention of the countries concerned, as well as that of our Council.

Good examples of the past, such as the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, are a source of inspiration for the countries' confidence-building process at the present stage. In this connection, the recommendations made by the multidisciplinary mission to the region, led by Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh two years ago, are of great importance and require due implementation.

Finally, my delegation fully supports the recommendations set out in the mission's report. They contain elements that will help our Council to continue to work jointly with the authorities of the countries and with the regional and subregional authorities. This will render the usefulness of our mission more relevant and timely than ever.

The President *(spoke in Arabic)*: I thank the representative of Angola for the kind words addressed to the presidency.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.